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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: VP GHAZI AL-YAWAR PREDICTS ALLAWI WILL BE PM

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Vice President Shaykh Ghazi al-Yawar told Ambassador on December 8 that only one of two groups will dominate after the December 15 election: the Allawi group (in which Shaykh Ghazi is running) or the "pro-Iranian group" (the Shia Alliance). Many Shia, Ghazi explained, particularly the secular and tribal groups, fear Iranian influence and will vote for the Allawi coalition. Ghazi said he hopes Allawi's coalition will win 55 seats. If the Shia Alliance wins fewer than 100 seats, he added, there is a good chance for a brokered coalition government formed by Ayad Allawi. Other groups -- including Chalabi's moderate Shia coalition and the Sunni Arab Tawafiq coalition -- will work with Allawi, as will the Kurds, Ghazi elaborated. The chances for a unity government are also good, Ghazi predicted, since VP Abd' al-Mahdi is pragmatic and will join in. Shaykh Ghazi said he might seek the post of National Assembly Speaker rather than an executive post in the new government.

2. (C) Shaykh Ghazi complained about some election hiccups including the De-Ba'athification Commission's attempt to disqualify nearly 200 candidates. Ghazi called this a purely political move, engineered by Ahmad Chalabi, to discredit the Allawi coalition by painting their Sunni partners as Ba'athists. Among those charged by the Commission is Shaykh Adnan al-Janabi, who Ghazi said was a former communist and never a member of the Ba'ath Party. Ghazi said he is not worried, however, because the IECI referred the Commission's list of "Ba'ath" candidates to the Presidency Council, which will take no action before the election.

3. (C) According to Shaykh Ghazi, the current Coalition military campaigns in Anbar and around Baghdad are unwise and will hurt Sunni outreach efforts because they cause bitterness that takes weeks to subside. Ghazi said that although he understands the Coalition does not want to give the bad guys a break, the operations are causing unnecessary resentment close to the election. Using jets and attack helicopters against cities and villages is also unacceptable, he said. If such attacks are to be used at all, he asserted, they should be highly-targeted lightning strikes -- like operations conducted by the Israelis.

4 (C) The Allawi coalition is conducting an aggressive campaign in Ninawa, where voter participation is expected to be high. Ghazi, who plans to spend a few days campaigning in Ninawa, said that 80% will for the Allawi alliance -- everyone except the Kurds. Support is particularly high in the Sunni tribal areas of Ninawa.

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